

3. IMPACTS OF CONSERVATION ON THESE INEQUITIES

3.1 RESTRICTIONS ON RESOURCE USE

Conservation often focuses, at least in the short-term, on a restriction of resource use through protective measures such as the establishment of protected areas and the formation of groups of enforcers. Because both women and men living in rural areas are often heavily reliant on the local natural resources, such conservation measures can immediately have a detrimental impact. For women who rely on such resources for fulfilling the everyday needs of the household – such as fuelwood and food – they can experience the negative impacts more and bear the costs to a greater extent through having to make an increased effort to gather the resources from alternative sites or risk being caught whilst attempting to continue collection illegally. Table 1 details the different impacts of the establishment of the Rwenzori National Park, Uganda on local social groups and their livelihoods.

	Labour	Time	Resources	Culture
Women	More agricultural work. More trips for fuel.	More time for fuel & agriculture	Decreased access to medicine; quality of fuelwood declining; loss of farming land; increased income from tourism in Ibanda.	Loss of traditional practices eg medicine collection; threats from rangers; risks when collecting fuelwood deep in forest.
Men	More labour in looking for building materials (bamboo).	More time spent looking for building materials.	Loss of animal meat, poles, honey, smilax, bamboo, fuelwood, mushroom, ropes, craft material; loss of income.	Loss of hunting traditions/practices, honey hunting skills, knowledge of when to collect resources, cultural sites, ability to pass NRM traditions to sons.
Youth (up to 25 years)	Increased labour while gathering building materials; and to chase vermin away from crops.	Loss of time in vermin control.	Income, jobs, skills from tourism increased in 3 areas.	Loss of above skills; take more risks through illegal activities; get new skills from alternative technologies.
Parish Community		Loss of time (doing all of the above).	Increase in price of resources from park eg baskets. Future potential: tourism income; revenue sharing; resource security; aesthetic value of park maintained; donor funds; new skills.	Traditional ownership not recognised – threats from rangers; loss of cultural sites; frustration over lack of control.

Table 1. Impact of the Establishment of the Rwenzori National Park, Uganda on Rural Livelihoods.

In the 1990s, Kaerezi women in Zimbabwe (Box 2.3) were particularly concerned about the potential impact of the local National Park on their access to two critical resources: firewood for daily use and reeds woven into handicrafts to be marketed in Nyanga's tourist centres. In poorer households, these handicrafts represented an important source of income. Women also gathered wild fruits and herbs within the park estate, supplementing the local diet and selecting plants with healing properties (Moore, 1996a).

Similarly, a study of the impacts of the Mkomazi Game Reserve in Tanzania showed that local communities had become poorer since its establishment because they had been forced to reduce their migration patterns due to the Reserve's protection of vital grazing and watering areas. Many are now being forced to adopt more sedentary ways of living and the Maasai women have become increasingly dependent on opportunistic selling of goods such as milk, wild vegetables and traditional medicine (Brockington and Homewood, 1999).

However, not all impacts have been negative. Resettlements of people from inside to outside Mt. Elgon Park due to increased protection policies produced a number of social advantages. These included greater opportunities for children to see their fathers more often and more easily, and living more closely together has enabled the establishment of women's clubs. The attitude to the Park and the ban on hunting is, in general, positive for both men and women (Scott, 1998).

3.2 INCREASED CONFLICTS WITH WILD ANIMALS

In a number of instances the establishment of protected areas has increased the incidence of conflicts between local communities and wild animals. For example, after the establishment of the Selous National Park, Tanzania, there was an increase in conflicts with animals, and women had trouble collecting water because of fear of being attacked by buffaloes (Songorwa, 1999). In Ethiopia around the Bale Mountains National Park, a commonly cited problem is the loss of livestock to hyenas which increasingly venture from within the core areas of the Park (Flintan, 2000).

3.3 IMPACTS DUE TO INEQUITABLE PARTICIPATION

Where consultations have been carried out with local communities concerning the development of protected areas and conservation policies, the discussions tend to have been dominated by those with more voice and power in the communities: the men. Women and their views and needs have been marginalised. As a result, such views and needs have not been incorporated into conservation developments, leading to a more adverse impact on women than men. In addition, support for related activities tends to be focussed on male activities rather than female: most jobs produced as a result of conservation are male dominated such as community game guards and scouts (Flintan, 2000; Barnes, 2000a and b).

In CAMPFIRE areas (see Section 8.1) women are generally most affected by activities at the local level as a result of their minimal participation in program-related activities. For example, the construction of a fence to keep wildlife away also cut off the path used by the women to fetch water and gather firewood and grass (Patel, 1998). Around Kilum Ijim NP in Cameroon, restrictions on use of the forest area included a ban on the grazing of goats. This caused major problems for local women who claimed that it resulted in increased raiding of their crops by stray goats in non-restricted areas (Abbot *et al.*, 1999).

CWM (Community Wildlife Management) in particular has, in general, been biased towards men. Women's projects remain marginalised from 'mainstream' male-focussed projects such as capacity building of scouts and tour guides (Matiza, 1993; Flintan, 2001c; Sullivan, 1999). In some countries this is also the case with forestry management, where donors are supporting existing male-dominated local institutions that revolve around hunting and male-focussed activities. For an example from Guinea see Box 3.1.

Box 3.1 Men and Masculinities in Guinea

In Guinea, donors such as the EU and forestry agents are supporting a new type of protected area where there are to be no park guards. Instead, protection will be given by hunters' brotherhoods that are now respected for their knowledge and authority as custodians of the bush. Working through such 'traditional organisations' supports the self-representation of donors and governments as part of a new era of conservation and 'sustainable development' which is 'participatory', and respectful of 'culture' and 'tradition'. Thus the approach adheres to modern development discourses that developed in opposition to, and eschew the repressive approaches, of the past. Equally, and in line with modern discourses about governance in Africa, the approach encourages organisations of 'civil society' to work in synergy with the state, while curtailing what have been seen as 'predatory' elements of state control.

As this has occurred, the revitalisation and reinforcement of hunting brotherhoods in these new political contexts plays powerfully into the construction and reconstruction of gender domains. A particular version of masculinity – the macho, gun-phallus bearing killer – is being reinforced in its hegemony over other possible masculinities. Ideologies of gender separation and stereotypes of feminine character are equally reinforced, emphasising the need to control female speech and sexuality. Furthermore, male-controlled institutions of African governance and rural control seem to be acquiring new support, resources and legitimacy at the expense of those through which many women exert power, agency and material resource control. Women's fishing groups, agricultural labour co-operation, village co-ordination for managing fire, and everyday practices for enriching soils and vegetation are among the institutions further formalised, and rendered more illegitimate in the eyes of the state, by the exclusive formalising of hunters' societies as ecological custodians.

(Leach, 1999).

3.4 LONG-TERM BENEFITS RECOGNISED

Though women may be adversely affected through conservation policies and practices, and show negative reactions to restrictions on resource use such as the closure of forests, over time they can realise the long-term advantages of conserving them. Conservation and development projects can aid this: in Cameroon, it was shown that those involved in livelihoods programmes had more positive attitudes towards restrictions (Abbot *et al.*, 1999).

In some areas, protected areas and the benefits they bring may be seen as the only opportunities for development open to local communities. In Nigeria, for example, people living on the borders of the Cross River NP:

“have pinned their hopes on the Park as the only institution that can and should assist them in gaining a better quality of life as a trade off for the Park's establishment and continued maintenance and existence. At this point in time, the Park may in fact be the only means through which the people can gain those improvements in [for example] health which have eluded them so far.” (Nadia McDonald, 1994b:22).

In addition there are instances where women have identified opportunities open to them as a result of conservation, and have utilised those opportunities for their benefit. For example, in South Africa a group of women mobilised themselves to approach the conservation authorities and gain their support for an income-generating project (see Box 3.2).

Box 3.2 The Siyabonga Craft Cooperative.

In 1995 a group of women approached the Natal Parks Board requesting help with establishing an outlet from which to sell their crafts, rather than along the roadside as they had previously done. The NPB provided assistance to the Dukuduku women by allocating the land near to where tourists left cars whilst visiting the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park. External funding to a total of R141,000 was accessed with help of the Board, enabling a permanent shop to be built on the site. A 10% commission is placed on all items to cover shop expenses, and profits are sometimes used to support women with young children who do not have a husband to provide for them.

The organisation of the Cooperative is well structured with a membership system and a committee. A roster is implemented to organise staffing. The NPB allows harvesting of selected natural resources from protected areas under their jurisdiction at certain times of the year, which keeps the cost of raw materials low for Cooperative members. The access to natural resources is particularly important to women because it was they who traditionally harvested and controlled the use of many plant products. In the case of *ikhwani* grass, two women were trained by the NPB to monitor the off-take to ensure it was at a sustainable level. Mats made from recycled supermarket plastic bags are also sold at the Siyabonga shop.

The income, though small, gives the women, many of whom are the poorest members of the community, a source of independent income. It also gives women opportunities to come together, network and build solidarity. Pride and confidence have increased. Organisational and entrepreneurial skills have been built up. Local leaders also suggest that residents have now been shown the value of conserving the environment.

(Scheyvens, 1999).